

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections to and rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith, which place the application into condition for allowance. The Examiner is thanked for outlining an avenue to bring this case closer to allowance in the Advisory Action.

I. STATUS OF CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10-12 and 15-18 are now pending. Claims 1 and 15 are currently amended, and claim 6 is cancelled, without prejudice.

No new matter is added by this amendment.

It is submitted that these claims are patentably distinct from the prior art cited by the Examiner, and that these claims are in full compliance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112. The amendments and remarks herein are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §§ 101, 102, 103 or 112; but rather the amendments and remarks are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

Support for the amended recitation in claim 1 is found throughout the specification and from cancelled claim 6.

II. 35 U.S.C. § 102 REJECTIONS

Claims 1-8, 10-12 and 15-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,022,902 to Koontz et al. (the “‘902 patent”). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The amendment to claim 1 with the recitation of cancelled claim 6, along the lines suggested by the Examiner in the May 21, 2003 Advisory Action, renders the rejection moot.

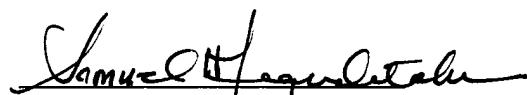
Consequently, reconsideration and withdrawal of the Section 102 rejections are believed to be in order and such actions are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

By this Amendment, claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10-12 and 15-18 should be allowed; and this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application, withdrawal of the rejections, and prompt issuance of the Notice of Allowance are, therefore, all earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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